

HOLCUS MOLLIS (POACEAE) IN
NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA

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The European grass *Holcus mollis* L. (creeping fog, creeping softgrass, German velvetgrass) has been introduced in North America to many areas west of the Cascade Mountains, from California north to British Columbia (Hitchcock and Chase, 1951). In the eastern United States it is sporadically adventive at Lewis Co., NY; Camden, NJ; Delaware Co., PA (Hitchcock and Chase, 1951); Columbia, NH (Pease, 1950) and Brighton, VT (Seymour, 1985). Outside its native European distribution it has also been introduced in Chile, India, Australia and New Zealand (Häflinger and Scholz, 1981).

Previous reports for Canada (Dore, 1937; Boivin, 1967; Scoggan, 1978) are based on the 1930 collection by Herb Groh at Langley Prairie, British Columbia. A collection from Newfoundland, along the Humber Valley railway line (49°11'N, 57°20'W), is the first record of this species from eastern Canada (Green 28 VIII 1974: CAN 490598). Recent collections from Canada (at CAN and DAO) indicate that *Holcus mollis* is persisting around Langley and spreading in ruderal habitats.

In Britain, *Holcus mollis* is a common and troublesome weed growing in a wide range of moisture and soil conditions (Hubbard, 1984). Climatic parameters at Corner Brook, Newfoundland (Energy, Mines and Resources Canada, 1974) are within the range of values seen within the natural distribution in Europe. Several other species of grasses with similar native distribution in the Old World have become well established in Newfoundland (e.g., *Danthonia decumbens* (L.) DC. in Lam. & DC., and *Anthoxanthum odoratum* L.) suggesting that climatic conditions should not pose an obstacle to the persistence and possible spread of *H. mollis* in Newfoundland. The arrival of this grass in such a remote area probably occurred during the development and construction of the Humber Canal and Deer Lake hydroelectric project with the importation of materials in the 1920's from England by the developer Sir W. G. Armstrong, Whitworth Co. Ltd. (England).

Holcus mollis is easily distinguished from the only other member of the genus naturalized in North America, *H. lanatus* L., by the extensive creeping rhizomes (not caespitose), glabrous foliage

(not villous) and a geniculate (not hooked, or curved) awn from the upper lemma.

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